



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 29, 2008

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Santa Barbara Beautiful Partnership Update

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Increase appropriations and estimated revenues by \$2,000 in the Parks Division Fiscal Year 2008 Operating Budget for the Garden Street Median Landscape Project; and
- B. Receive a presentation on the Parks and Recreation Department programs that receive support from and partner with Santa Barbara Beautiful.

DISCUSSION:

Formed in 1965, Santa Barbara Beautiful has a long history of providing support for the City's Forestry and Parks programs. Since 1977, Santa Barbara Beautiful has planted over 10,000 street trees within the City of Santa Barbara through private donations, which greatly contributes to the City's ongoing designation as a Tree City USA. Moreover, Santa Barbara Beautiful sponsors commemorative trees, Arbor Day, and hosts an annual awards competition and ceremony, among other activities.

Each year, Santa Barbara Beautiful provides funds to purchase new street trees and contributes \$10,000 to the Forestry Program for the care of young trees. In addition, Santa Barbara Beautiful awards funds for one-time projects that include creek restoration, park landscape renovation, street tree care, and urban forest management. Santa Barbara Beautiful also sponsored the Old Mission Creek Youth Apprentice Project in 2004. With the exception of the annual \$10,000 for the Forestry Program which supports hourly staff, the Parks and Recreation Department provides matching staff support for project implementation, and depending on the project, other costs such as project design, permitting, construction, and community outreach.

In addition to requesting the appropriation of \$2,000 for the Garden Street Median Landscape Project, this report provides Council with an update on projects and programs that receive support from Santa Barbara Beautiful. The Park and Recreation Commission received an update at its meeting in January 2008.

Recently Completed Projects

San Roque Creek Stewardship at Stevens Park

The purpose of the San Roque Creek Stewardship Project at Stevens Park is to build stewardship through community restoration, demonstrate appropriate native and riparian planting and landscapes, and educate residents about the water quality benefits of using native plants in backyards and gardens. The project was completed over three phases, beginning in fall 2006 and culminating in March 2008. Over 1,000 trees, shrubs, and grasses were installed by Creeks Division and Parks Division staff and 110 volunteers, including school children. The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden provided design services. Planting days included short lectures on native plants, integrated pest management, and planting techniques. Santa Barbara Beautiful funded \$10,000 of the \$30,000 project. These funds were encumbered in Fiscal Year 2007.

State Street Deep Watering

Completed in summer 2007, the purpose of this project was to conduct a one-time fertilization and a one-time deep watering of State Street trees between Gutierrez and Victoria Streets. Santa Barbara Beautiful paid a tree care contractor \$3,900 directly for the project.

Garden Street Median Landscape

With its interest in supporting landscaping in areas considered gateways to the City, Santa Barbara Beautiful provided \$2,000 for the installation of new landscaping in the Garden Street median at Cabrillo Boulevard. Using a drought tolerant plant pallet of succulents, the Parks Division completed installation of 200 plants in late March 2008.

Projects Underway

Plaza Vera Cruz Renovation Project

The purpose of the project is to enhance Plaza Vera Cruz with new landscaping, new lighting, improvements to the alleyway, and access to the playground. The Department received a grant of \$17,000 from Santa Barbara Beautiful for the purchase of plants and a boulder/plaque with historical information and recognition of the donation. These funds were appropriated by Council on March 25, 2008. This support augments Redevelopment Agency Funds of approximately \$377,000. The project is scheduled to begin construction in late April and will be complete in July 2008.

Young Tree Care

In addition to its annual \$10,000 commitment (which is appropriated with the annual budget), Santa Barbara Beautiful recently hired Dan Condon as an independent consultant to assist in the care of young trees. The young tree care consultant works directly with Forestry staff on a seasonal basis to provide small tree training, pruning, staking and tying, and tree well weeding. This assistance is equivalent to 96 -120 work hours.

Urban Forest Management Plan

Santa Barbara Beautiful has committed \$6,000 toward the completion of the Urban Forest Management Plan. In addition to providing information on City tree ordinances, tree planting locations, and designated tree species, the urban forest management plan will communicate the economic, environmental, and social value of the public urban forest.

The plan will also establish immediate and long-range goals for protection and enhancement of the urban forest. With the completion of the Street and Park Tree Inventory in January 2008, work on the plan will begin summer 2008. Once complete, the plan will be posted on the City's website and accessible to the public in a variety of formats. The Department has also applied for a \$42,000 grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire to assist in the development of additional baseline information and public outreach materials.

Santa Barbara Beautiful Awards

The Parks and Recreation Department recently received a number of awards from Santa Barbara Beautiful. In 2004, the Creeks Division's Restoration of Old Mission Creek at Bohnett Park received the Open Public Space Award. In 2005, Parks Division staff received the Jacaranda Award. In 2006, the expansion of Shoreline Park along Shoreline Drive received the Open Space Award. Most recently, in 2007, the Department received the Architectural/Natural Feature Award for the Stone Pines on Anapamu Street.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Santa Barbara Beautiful funds in the amount of \$2,000 will be used to install new landscaping in the Garden Street median at Cabrillo Boulevard. Other funds for projects identified above have been appropriated through prior Council action.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Santa Barbara's urban forest and its park system are invaluable elements of the community's quality of life. Trees and open space areas improve air quality, contribute to energy conservation, reduce storm water runoff, and provide wildlife habitat. Other values include recreation, health, social, and economic. Santa Barbara Beautiful plays a critical role in the City's ability to maintain and enhance its urban forest and park system.

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APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office